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DEPARTMENT FOR DS/IP/RD/SCA, DS/DSS/ITA, CA AND SA/INS

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: ASEC CASC PTER  
SUBJECT: EMBASSY COLOMBO EAC MEETING OCTOBER 16

¶1. (SBU) Summary: AmEmbassy Colombo convened an Emergency Action Committee (EAC) meeting on October 16, 2009. The EAC discussed post's security posture in light of the anticipated release of the Department of State's Congressionally-mandated report regarding incidents involving possible violations of international humanitarian law that may have occurred during the conflict of the GoSL and the LTTE. (See "Report to Congress on Incidents during the Recent Conflict in Sri Lanka.") The EAC discussed the implications for AMCITs working, living and vacationing in Sri Lanka during period following release of the report, including any possible threat to them. EAC concurred on the idea that the possibility of protest and demonstrations near USG facilities is the biggest threat and may possibly occur in the early days following the release.

RSO will dispatch letters requesting additional support of Sri Lankan Police Service (SLPS) personnel on the day of the report's release; RSO has requested additional SLPS personnel be available to quell the protest if demonstrations do indeed form. The letters to the SLPS Headquarters notes the report's release date in Washington as October 21. The EAC directed a warden message to be released on Wednesday, October 21, informing the AMCIT community of the expected report's release and the need to maintain a low profile and avoid all large gatherings of people.

Secondly, the EAC discussed the security plans and posture for upcoming celebration to commemorate the 224th U.S. Marine Corps Birthday, as well as any threats, if any, to the event on November 7. The EAC concurred that there was no information to indicate a threat to the event, and agreed the plan outlined by the RSO was commensurate with the security environment. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) On October 16, 2009, AmEmbassy Colombo convened an EAC meeting. Present for the meeting were the Deputy Chief of Mission, acting Regional Security Officer, Political Chief, Economic Chief, Management Officer, Consular Officer, Public Affairs Officer, USAID Director, Defense Attaché, Office of Defense Cooperation Chief, Marine Security Guard Detachment Commander, International Broadcasting Bureau Station Chief, and Community Liaison Officer. The agenda items for the meeting were:

¶A. Security threats and posture and possible demonstrations in light of the Congressionally-mandated report regarding incidents involving possible violations of international humanitarian law that may have occurred during the conflict between the GoSL and the LTTE.

¶B. Security for the Marine Corps Birthday celebration, scheduled for 1930 hrs. local on November 7, 2009 at the Hilton Hotel, 2 Sri Chittlampalam A. Gardiner Mawatha, Colombo 2, Sri Lanka.

¶3. (SBU) In light of the report's anticipated release to

Congress on Wednesday October 21., the EAC discussed the potential security impact on AMCITs in Sri Lanka, and the mission and its personnel more specifically. No specific threat of demonstrations has come forward at this time, but the EAC concurred that it is highly likely that demonstrations protesting this report will be conducted, possibly with the support of the GoSL. These protests will most likely be peaceful and directed specifically at or near USG facilities and not aimed at mission personnel or their residences. However, due to the possibility of violence and the gatherings of large groups of people, the EAC advised that AMCITs keep a low profile and to avoid all large gatherings of people throughout the country. On the day of the report's release in Sri Lanka and the days following, the EAC concurred that embassy employees should consider holding internal meetings only and limiting their travel during business hours outside the embassy. RSO has requested additional support from the SLPS in the event that spontaneous demonstrations or planned demonstrations are held at or around USG facilities. Additional LGF members and SD members will be responded to all USG facilities as well, and the MSG Detachment will be on call at the embassy on the days immediately following the release of the report.

**¶4. (SBU)** The RSO briefed the EAC on the security plan for the MSG Birthday Celebration, noting that the venue, time, and date of this year's event are different from last year. The MSG Detachment, which is planning the event, expects approximately 200 guests and will provide a guest list to the RSO prior to the event. The hotel is located within a high security zone of Colombo, in which all vehicles and passengers are subject to screening by GSL security forces. Moreover, the Sri Lanka Police service (SLPS) and other security forces have numerous officers on duty 24/7 in the high security zones to quell demonstrations or disturbances. The hotel is set back from the main road approximately 25 meters and has an underground parking facility. The Ministerial Security Division (MSD) of the SLPS, from which the RSO enlisted Ball support, will screen all vehicles parking underground for explosive devices. The hotel will designate a parking area specifically for Ball guests. The hotel's unarmed security force will augment the 10-12 uniformed Local Guard Force (LGF) personnel assigned to work the event. LGF personnel will control access to the event, using metal detectors to screen guests (except for VIPs). LGF personnel will check the guest list to ensure that no unwanted persons "crash" the event. One embassy mobile patrol vehicle will be on standby at the hotel. Three to five MSD personnel, in plainclothes, will be on the roadside and at curbside of the hotel to assist LGF personnel. MSD personnel will screen the venue for explosive devices two hours prior to the event, after which LGF personnel will stand post and control the area. The LGF will not allow armed bodyguards or protective details to enter the venue without specific RSO approval. RSO will provide identification media (pins) for all non-Embassy security and hotel wait staff prior to the event.

**¶5. (U)** Post will continue to monitor the security environment and plans to safeguard these events. Post will report further developments, if any, per septel. POC for this message is A/RSO Aaron LaFortune, who may be contacted at 94.11.249.8885, 94.11.249.8888 (MSG Post 1 after regular business hours), or via the classified and unclassified email systems.

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